



Valley College Art Student's Work Featured in Local Gallery

Student who overcame injury has her work in an exhibit called "Woman!"

By: [Seda Terzyan](#)



Anji Craun is an artist to the core with a natural talent for creation despite limited formal training and having suffered a debilitating injury that hindered her ability to paint.

Craun's plans to study art at the College of Charleston in South Carolina in 2002 were violently changed when she was attacked by a pit-bull after trying to stop it from attacking another woman. The dog nearly bit off her

entire thumb, incapacitating the use of her right hand for more than five months.

Now, just four years later, Craun is a Valley College art major with her work on display at the NoHo Gallery L.A. in an exhibit called "Woman!" that will be featured through April 1.

"It made me realize the importance of every little piece of the body," said the 29-year-old artist.

While in the process of healing, Craun decided to take her long-awaited trip to California, where she's lived since with her fiancée, Freddy Herrera, bass player for the rock band, The Exies.

Craun's painting atmosphere is always full of music and creation with her fiancée's band practicing and writing new songs while she paints.

"Myself and the whole band really enjoy the fact that Anji's creating at the same time we are," Herrera said. "Plus, we get the first look at all her new art."

With her use of loud, vibrant colors full of contrast and depth, yet possessing a mysterious balance of value. She paints with little planning, riding on the wings of inspiration, she is truly a painting rock star.

"The women in my recent series exude sensuality, power, serenity and self discovery," Craun said. "Each piece is a reflection of a moment, whether it be sadness, rejoice or contemplation."

Craun's recovery was a success; she decided to continue her studies by signing up for classes at Valley. She has been enrolled for three semesters now and has taken some great art classes, like life drawing with professor Samuel Goffredo, where her drawing skills were tuned. She also took graphic design and photographics with instructor Thomas Mossman, from which some of her work is on display in the halls of the art building. Presently, she is taking her second semester of oil painting with instructor Walter Impert, which has helped her discover new avenues of her abilities. "Anji's paintings are filled with intuitive color and form, each complimenting the other synergistically, creating rich, vivid artwork," said Impert.

Craun describes her paintings as "... neither realistic nor abstract. Although they lean toward realistic." I tend to be more representational so that the attention is not drawn to detailed perfection, but rather on the feeling the piece communicates as a whole." She strives to capture an aura, a fleeting moment of a specific emotion. Most of her paintings consist of the female figures in various moods, isolated in simple backgrounds, only meant for contrasting the figure.

Originally from Northern Virginia where she was born and raised, Craun has moved many times since then. After graduating high school she moved to Atlanta, where she studied fashion design for a short period before leaving for Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This was where she discovered painting as a hobby.

Craun was 23-years-old when she received a painting set as a gift from a friend and things took off from there.

Without former training or direction, Craun began to create art, and develop her unique style. She began to come out of her shell, as her work was sold to private owners, it was seen by more people. She received several commissions for her edgy, powerful paintings from nightclubs, coffee shops and other small businesses, where her work was displayed. But this is her first time featured in an actual art gallery.

Craun's medium of choice is oil and acrylic paints. She works with confidence, sometimes mixing her colors right on the canvas. She never constricts herself to a primary plan, but always goes beyond it. Craun can truly be defined as creating a new wave of modern art.

"My paintings symbolize a wide range of universal feelings, any viewer can relate to them on some level, male or female," said Craun.

Twelve of Craun's paintings will be displayed at the gallery, all of which she has created over the past year. Her favorite from the series is a painting called "Moon Struck." It has a mysterious beauty to it, but also conveys a simplistic yet intriguing darker side.

You can view this talented Valley student's work at the NoHo Gallery L.A. or visit her website at www.yessy.com/angicraun.